

however, are alive and well in the new SANDF and there was never any break in their lineage. Perhaps the only break is in the minds and hearts of those who long for an era which has passed forever and who cannot adjust to the new dispensation which has replaced it. This is reflected in the musical CD by Lourens Fourie, which is included with the book. The music is pleasantly catchy and the lyrics are stirring. Yet one cannot but feel that, like Vera Lynn, "There'll always be an England", they belong to a different world; a different age.

This is a book which may find favour amongst a certain section of the old special forces operators and their barroom buddies. It is not lacking in enthusiasm, but it is not a serious and analytical portrayal of South Africa's special forces. Its shortcomings result in it not doing proper justice to the story of a select band of warriors, some of whom were amongst the finest soldiers that South Africa has ever produced. They have served and continue to serve their country selflessly, but most of them readily admit their shortcomings and failures. They deserve an objective and professional record of their activities for the benefit of posterity. Not an exercise in backslapping self-congratulation.

*Brigadier General McGill Alexander, Chief of Staff Regional Joint Task Force South, Port Elizabeth*

### **Vlamgat: The story of the Mirage F1 in the South African Air Force**

Dick Lord

Covos-Day, Weltevreden Park: 2000

Price not known

The tempo of change in Southern Africa has caused one nearly to forget the Namibian bush war of the 1980. The historical scene has also been dominated by the centenary of the Second Anglo-Boer War and the memory of 120 years ago the year before last year with the crucial battle of Isandlwana and this year the battle of Majuba.

Although it is important to comprehend the impact of the above named events in our history we must not forget the closer events that also shaped our lives. During the past decade books like Willem Steenkamp's *Border War* gave readers an insight into the war in which South Africa was involved from 1966 to 1989. In this book and a lot of popular photographic studies the role of the South African Air Force received some attention. However, these studies cannot in themselves be regarded as the definite study of the role of air power in this conflict as they either cover to large a ground, or tend to be too popular inclined.

Dick Lord gained fame with his book *Fire, Flood and Ice* on the search and rescue missions of the South African Air Force. This time he put to paper an aspect that is close to the heart and in which he was personally involved the history of the Mirage F1 in the South African Air Force. This study involves a lot of

aspects. The operational and tactical, the social, technical and the tragedies in the loss of lives are all there. Although this book is largely the product of his reminiscences it is an important contribution to the role of air power in the named war. It gives the reader an insight into the problems encountered by South Africa cut off from opportunities to buy military hardware anywhere in the world and how the South African Air Force had to compete with adversaries equipped by a superpower, the Soviet Union, in an escalating war.

The story starts with the acquisition of the planes from France, just before the compulsory international arms boycott was proclaimed by the United Nations in 1977. One is astonished by the teething problems that the South African Air Force and the Arms Industry had to overcome to get the planes ready in time for the escalating conflict in Namibia. This is followed by a chronology of the establishment of the Mirage squadrons in the Air Force and the role they played in this war. The end of the war, scaling down an eventual closing of some of the squadrons is also described.

The book major asset is its integration of expertise with personal involvement. For the student of Military History as well as the Air Force personnel who served and want to cherish old memories this book will be read with satisfaction. It will not be the final say on the use of air power in the border war, but it is a good start.

The only disturbing aspects of the book are the use of the word "terrorist" to describe PLAN guerrillas and the fact that certain technical aspects are not always sufficiently explained to the layman.

*Vlamgat* is an important contribution to the annals of South African military history and the social life of the Namibian border war. I would recommend the book to any student of air power in the contemporary world.

*Col (Dr) C.J. Jacobs, Resident Military Historian, South African Army College, Pretoria*

### **Peacekeeping in Africa: Capabilities and Culpabilities**

E.G. Berman & K.E. Sams

United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), Geneva, Switzerland and Institute for Security Studies: Pretoria, 2000

540 Pages

Preface

Glossary of terms

Tables, maps, annexes

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African states increasingly carry the responsibility for the promotion and maintenance of peace and security on the African continent. This book provides a